

A STUDY OF THE EFFECT
OF A
COURSE IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE
UPON
STUDENTS' OWN LITERARY APPRECIATION
EXPERIMENTALLY DETERMINED
IN A NORMAL SCHOOL

BY
EUNICE KATHERINE CRABTREE

A DISSERTATION

submitted to the Board of Higher Studies in Education of The Johns Hopkins University in
conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

MAY, 1930

WASHINGTON
JUDD AND DETWEILER, INC.,
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E. K. C.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

In teaching in a Normal School, an instructor is concerned not only with the professional development of the student, but also with his personal growth. The student in Children's Literature probably will be teaching two years hence and thereby determine, in a large measure, the literary appreciation of some thirty or forty children. This, therefore, becomes the Normal School instructor's chief aim in a course in Children's Literature: To so prepare these students that as teachers their pupils may enjoy good books. Such an aim necessitates the student's familiarity with books for children, and knowledge of ways of presenting literature to children. The question then arises: What happens to the personal growth in literary appreciation of these students of Junior College age (sixteen to nineteen)? Will such a course in Children's Literature, as indicated above, influence the student's own appreciation of literature? To answer these questions is the purpose of this study.

There are two elements common to the appreciation of literature both by adults and by children. These are: the method of developing appreciation, and certain factors included in genuine appreciation.

The method is one of developing taste. "Literature is the school subject most commonly representative of the appreciation type. The objective is plainly a taste for good reading, an inclination to devote one's leisure in part to that which has abiding value."¹ Since it is a matter of taste it can neither be taught nor forced but is developed by contact with the best. "Taste is only to be educated by contemplation, not of the tolerably good, but of the truly excellent. I, therefore, show you only the best works; and when you are grounded in these, you will have a standard for the rest

¹ Morrison, Henry C.: *The Practice of Teaching in the Secondary School*. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois, 1926, p. 319.

which you will know how to value without over-rating them." (Goethe)²

Teachers and critics agree that there are certain elements essential in genuine appreciation. "Certain characteristics are so commonly thought to be important in poetry that their loss would spoil the poem for the eye of any intelligent critic not blinded by controversy; among these are the emotional tone, the imaginative quality of the thought, and the rhythmic form."³ Or stated negatively; "poetry is not prose; it is not, in its essence, moralistic or intellectualistic; that, in its finest forms, it does not spring from a refusal to face experience or from a sentimentalization, that is, a falsifying, of reality."⁴ These elements as well as the ability to discover the theme, to participate in the experience, to react to sensory images, to recognize true comparisons, to recognize fresh and trite expressions, and to recognize rhythm, can be discovered and measured by the Abbott and Trabue, Exercises in Judging Poetry, and Logassa and Wright, Test for the Appreciation of Literature.

Therefore, the main criterion of the study is the growth of students in certain measurable elements of appreciation, as demonstrated by comparison of the initial and final scores of the experimental and control groups on these objective tests. The elements measured by these tests are: ability to judge poetry, measured by the Abbott and Trabue Exercises in the Judging of Poetry; ability to discover the theme; ability to participate in the experience; reaction to sensory images; recognition of true comparisons; recognition of fresh and trite expressions; and recognition of rhythm measured by the Logassa and Wright Tests for the Appreciation of Literature.

² Kilpatrick, William H.: (Goethe on the Education of Tastes), Source Book in the Philosophy of Education, New York, Macmillan Co., 1925, p. 297.

³ Abbott, Allan and Trabue, M. R.: "A Measure of Ability to Judge Poetry." Teachers College Bulletin, Fourteenth Series No. 2, 1922, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York City.

⁴ Chapin, Elsa and Thomas, Russell: A New Approach to Poetry. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1920.

CHAPTER II

SUBJECTS AND TESTS

The subjects were one hundred and eighty-four students enrolled in the experimenter's English classes at the State Normal School at Towson, Maryland. Of this group one hundred and thirty-eight received instruction in Children's Literature and forty-six in English Composition. The former was the experimental group and the latter the control. The control group was composed of first year students from the counties. The experimental group was composed of seventy-two first-year students from the counties and sixty-six second-year students from Baltimore City. All of these students were preparing to teach in the public elementary schools of Baltimore City or of the State of Maryland.

The following tests (of interest to the experimenter) were given to all entering students by the Department of Educational Measurements:

Thurstone. Psychological Examination for College Freshmen.

Pressey. Sentence Structure.

Grammar.

Whipple. Reading Comprehension Test for High School and College Students.

The student record cards (on file in the office of the school) contained additional objective data, such as: chronological ages, teachers' marks in Normal School subjects, and teachers' marks in High School subjects.

TESTS

The tests used in the experiment were:

Abbott, Allan and Trabue, M. R. Exercises in Judging Poetry, Series X and Y. Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York.

Logassa, Hannah, and Wright, Martha McCoy. Tests for the Appreciation of Literature. Public School Publishing Company, Bloomington, Illinois.

The key used in analyzing the choices of students in the Exercises in Judging Poetry was sent to the experimenter by Professor Abbott.

The tests were administered and scored by the experimenter who found them easy to handle. A "test atmosphere" never existed, for the students considered them as new and interesting class room exercises and sincerely enjoyed doing them.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

The Equivalent-groups Method was selected for the experiment. "When the purpose of an experiment is to determine the amount of change due directly to an experimental factor or factors, the equivalent-groups method is valid:

1. Where the total net change in the trait or traits in question produced by irrelevant factors is negligible, or when the amount of such change is measured and discounted by the use of a control experimental factor.

2. Where it is really possible to equate groups."¹

In order to determine the effect of a course in Children's Literature upon student's own appreciation it was necessary:

1. To know what the student's appreciation was, according to certain objective tests of appreciation, before the application of the experimental factor.

2. To know how much change might be due to natural growth and other school influences. Therefore, a control group was selected which was equivalent to the experimental group with the exception of the application of the experimental factor.

3. To know what change in measurable appreciation takes place during the application of the experimental factor. Therefore final tests were given to both groups, and scores on initial and final tests compared.

The initial status of the experimental and control groups was determined by scores on the X series of the Abbott and Trabue Exercises in Judging Poetry, and on the Logassa-Wright Tests for the Appreciation of Literature.

For twelve weeks the experimental group was given a course in Children's Literature by the experimenter. The control group was given a course in composition for the same length of time and also by the experimenter.

¹ McCall, William A.: *How to Experiment in Education*. New York, The Macmillan Co., 1923, p. 29.

The final status was determined by the scores on the Y series of the Abbott-Trabue Exercises in Judging Poetry, and the Logassa-Wright Tests for the Appreciation of Literature.

EQUATING THE GROUPS

The attempt was made to select two groups as much alike as possible in respect to literary appreciation and other factors which have some influence upon appreciation. The coefficients of correlation of the initial score (Abbott and Trabue test) and other factors were computed by means of the Pearson or Brevais formula:

$$r = \frac{\frac{\sum x'y'}{N} - C_x C_y}{\sigma_x \sigma_y}$$

The coefficients are given in Table I.

TABLE I
COEFFICIENTS OF CORRELATION OF INITIAL
SCORES ON ABBOTT-TRABUE TEST AND
OTHER FACTORS

Grammar and Sentence Structure ²	.43
Reading Comprehension ³	.42
General Ability ⁴	.27

The coefficients of correlation as shown in Table I indicate that there is some relation between the appreciation of literature and these other factors—grammar and sentence structure, reading comprehension, and general ability—as measured by objective tests. Therefore, these scores were used in equating the groups.

The equated groups were obtained by means of the experimenter's selecting in pairs, one student from the experimental group and one from the control group, those students having identical initial scores on Abbott-Trabue Test; having similar scores in grammar and sentence structure, in reading comprehension, and general ability; having the same

² Pressey: Test in Grammar. Test in Sentence Structure.

³ Whipple: Reading Comprehension for High School and College Students.

⁴ Thurstone: Psychological Examination for College Freshmen.

teacher, for the experimenter was the teacher; having a similar environment, since all students were from the counties and living in the dormitory; having the same school program; having spent the same length of time in the Normal School, since all were first year students. In this manner thirty-two pairs were selected from the entire group of one hundred and eighty-four students. Equated groups are given in Table II.

TABLE II
EQUATED GROUPS

	Medians and Quartiles	Experimental	Control
Abbott-Trabue Exercises in Judging Poetry.....	Median..... Q ₁ Q ₃ Q.....	6.00 5.25 7.40 1.07	6.00 5.25 7.40 1.07
Sentence Structure and Grammar.....	Median..... Q ₁ Q ₃ Q.....	45.20 38.66 47.71 4.52	42.00 38.00 48.33 5.16
Reading Comprehension..	Median..... Q ₁ Q ₃ Q.....	9.00 7.5 11.6 2.05	11.28 7.5 12.42 2.46
General Ability	Median .. Q ₁ Q ₃ Q.....	133.33 83.33 160.00 38.33	115.00 75.00 157.50 41.25
Chronological Age.....	Median..... Q ₁ Q ₃ Q.....	18.36 17.41 19.16 .80	18.00 17.41 18.45 .52

CHAPTER IV

EXPERIMENTAL FACTOR

The experimental factor in this study was a course in Children's Literature presented to students as prescribed in the catalog and course of study of the Normal School. The classes met three times a week for twelve weeks; the class period was fifty minutes in length.

The instructor's outline of the course was:

Children's Literature

Aim: That children may enjoy good books.

Since the course is given to adults who are to become teachers, it is necessary that they:

- I. Know and enjoy good books for children
 - A. Wide reading of all types of literature for children (Fairy Tales, Mother Goose and Nursery Rhymes, Modern Fantastic Tales, Myths, Fables, Nature Stories, Realistic Stories, Romance Cycles, Biography and Hero Stories, and Traditional and Modern Poetry).
 - B. Evaluating prose and poetry for children
 1. Criticisms of experts
 2. Setting up standards for judging good literature
 - C. Establishing personal library
 - D. Bibliography of *favorites* for children
- II. Know the interests of children of various ages
 - A. Scientific studies of children's reading interests
 - B. Course of study
 - C. Investigations and reports of expert teachers
 - D. Personal experience with children
- III. Know ways of interesting children in the reading of good books. Various techniques are suggested by observations of demonstration teacher's teaching of, and student's planning of:

- A. Appreciation lessons
 - B. Story telling
 - C. Library periods
 - D. Book reviews
 - E. Use of pictures (beautifully illustrated editions, book covers)
 - F. Dramatizations
 - G. Memorization
- IV. See possibilities of enriching other subjects (History, Geography, etc.) with appropriate literature
- A. Units (second year classes)
 - B. Cycles and special studies (first and second year classes)
- V. Experience the creating of something in prose or verse and thereby seeing more vividly the ways of providing opportunities for children's *free expression*
- A. Verse or short prose sketches
 - B. Stories
 - C. Dramatizations
 - D. Assembly programs

The directions for the preparation of units (for second year students) were:

Preparation of Units

- I. Background for Unit
- A. Read extensively the literature on topic assigned.
 - B. Keep a carefully annotated bibliography of the selections on the topic which are of highest literary value and most appropriate to the interests of children of specific ages (grade assigned).
- II. Formulation of Theme
- Determine after exploration of material on topic, as suggested under No. 1, what literary experiences you desire to give your children. With these desired outcomes in mind, select the central theme for your unit.
- III. Organization of Unit
- Select and organize the materials, activities, and procedures which are necessary for the development of the theme.

IV. Contents of Written Unit

- A. State the topic, desired literary experiences, and theme.
- B. Present plan for unit in outline form.
- C. Outline intricate poem-patterns and appreciation lessons.
- D. Write out plans for activities, concomitant and associative learning responses.
- E. Give bibliography of selections for appreciation lessons.
- F. Give bibliography for the children's further reading on theme and topic.

V. Contents of Unwritten Unit

- A. Development of own ability to evaluate literature.
- B. Development of ability to organize subject matter about a central theme.
- C. Realization of relationships between unit and all school and out of school experiences for self and children.
- D. Enrichment of own literary experiences through sincere appreciation of your chosen selections.

The directions for the making of cycles (for first year students) were:

Making of Cycle

I. Background for Cycle

- A. Read for your own enjoyment all the modern poetry you can obtain.
- B. Make note of poems you like particularly so that you may return to them. You may bring some to class with you if you wish to do so.

II. Formulation of Theme

- A. Class discussion of themes found in free reading which are of especial interest to students.
- B. Select one of these themes which you enjoy and which would be of interest to children.

III. Organization of Cycle

- A. Select the poems to develop the theme upon these bases:

1. Literary value
 2. Children's interests
 3. Appropriateness
 4. Personal appreciation
- B. Select other materials to develop the theme:
1. Pictures
 2. Victrola records
 3. Maps
 4. Books on related topics

IV. Contents of Cycle

- A. Title page
- B. Bibliography
- C. Copies of poems in order of presentation
- D. Suggestions for use of materials
- E. Bibliography, for children, of other poems containing the same theme, stories on same theme, and other poems by same poets
- F. Pictures, list of records, etc.

Outcomes of Cycles Determined by:

- A. Comments of students to instructor during making of cycle indicating sincere enjoyment of poetry
- B. Conferences with instructor after the student has presented cycle to children. What poems did the children want read and reread? What poems or parts of poems did they want to learn? What further reading, creative writing or drawing they did which was stimulated by the cycle?

There were thirty-six periods for class work and between fifty-four and seventy-two hours for outside reading and study. The class periods were taken up with the interchange of ideas of students with each other and the instructor in respect to the literature and textbooks which had been read during the study hours, reading of selections by instructor or students, discussion of ways of presenting selection to children, criticisms of demonstration lessons, planning of units and cycles, and tests. A detailed outline of the method used and students' bibliography are given in the appendix.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS

The criterion was: The growth in literary appreciation of students as determined by comparing the initial and final scores of the Abbott-Trabue and the Logassa-Wright appreciation tests.

Abbott-Trabue, Exercises in Judging Poetry

The reliability coefficient of this test was secured by obtaining the coefficient of correlation for the half-test using the Pearson or Brevais formula:

$$r = \frac{\frac{\sum x'y'}{N} - C_x C_y}{\sigma_x \sigma_y}$$

The coefficient for the half-test was $r = .526$. The coefficient of correlation for the whole test was secured by using the Spearman-Brown "prophecy" formula:¹

$$r_x = \frac{2r_h}{1 + r_h}$$

The coefficient of reliability obtained in this manner was $r = .689$.

The experimental and control groups had identical initial scores on the Abbott-Trabue, Exercises in Judging Poetry. The median score and quartiles correspond rather closely with those given for High School Seniors;² they are slightly below the standards for College Freshmen as shown in Table III.

¹ Garrett, Henry E.: "The Reliability of Test Scores." Statistics in Psychology and Education, p. 267. Longmans, Green and Co., 1926.

² Abbott, Allan, and Trabue, M. R.: "Standards of Attainment." A Measure of Ability to Judge Poetry. Teachers College Bulletin, September 23, 1922. Columbia University, New York City, p. 13.

TABLE III
SCORES ON ABBOTT-TRABUE TEST SERIES X

	Experimental group	High school seniors	College freshmen
Median.....	6.00	5.98	6.80
Q ₁	5.25	4.51	5.33
Q ₃	7.40	7.53	8.52
Q.....	1.07	1.51	1.59

The scores on the final test of the Abbott-Trabue, Exercises in Judging Poetry, for the control group indicate very little change. The scores for the experimental group on the final test indicate considerable growth. The median on the final test is 2.71 points higher than on the initial test. The medians and quartiles correspond rather closely with those given in the "Standards of Attainment" for a group termed miscellaneous educated group.³ The final scores for the experimental group are higher than those given for College Juniors and Seniors and lower than those for graduate students in English, which means a growth of about three years from senior high school level to above senior college level. The results of the initial and final tests for the experimental and control groups are given in Table IV. The comparison of the final scores of the experimental group and scores for other groups is given in Table V.

TABLE IV
INITIAL AND FINAL SCORES

	EXPERIMENTAL		CONTROL	
	Initial	Final	Initial	Final
Median.....	6.00	8.71	6.00	5.75
Q ₁	5.25	7.50	5.25	4.30
Q ₃	7.40	9.66	7.40	7.71
Q.....	1.07	1.08	1.07	1.70

³ Abbott, Allan, and Trabue, M. R.: "Standards of Attainment." A Measure of Ability to Judge Poetry. Teachers College Bulletin, September 23, 1922. Columbia University, New York City, p. 13.

TABLE V
COMPARISON OF EXPERIMENTAL GROUP AND
OTHER GROUPS ON SERIES Y

	Experi- mental	College juniors and seniors	Miscel- laneous	Graduate students in English
Median.....	8.71	7.97	8.24	9.61
Q ₁	7.50	6.45	6.33	7.65
Q ₃	9.66	10.11	10.31	11.67
Q.....	1.08	1.83	1.99	2.01

Logassa-Wright, Tests for the Appreciation of Literature

The reliability coefficient for the whole test was obtained by securing the self-correlation (odds against evens) using the Pearson or Brevais formula:

$$r = \frac{\frac{\sum x'y'}{N} - C_x C_y}{\sigma_x \sigma_y}$$

The coefficient obtained was .41 (for the half-test). The coefficient of correlation for the whole test was secured by using the Spearman-Brown formula:⁴

$$r = \frac{2r_h}{1 + r_h}$$

The coefficient of reliability obtained in this manner was $r = .58$.

The reliability for each of the six tests was obtained in the same manner. The coefficient of reliability for each was:

Test I. Discovery of Theme $r = .63$

Test II. Reader Participation $r = .33$

Test III. Reaction to Sensory Images $r = .24$

Test IV. Recognition of True Comparisons $r = .31$

Test V. Recognition of Fresh and Trite Expressions
 $r = .095$

⁴ Garrett, Henry E.: "The Reliability of Test Scores." Statistics in Psychology and Education, p. 268. Longmans, Green and Co., 1926.

In Table VI, the residual gains for each of the six Logassa-Wright tests are given for the experimental and control groups.

On test one, Discovery of Theme, the experimental group gained .97 score points and the control group lost .25. This was expected since the method of instruction in the experimental group was concerned with determining the themes of poems in the construction of units and cycles, and the themes of stories in planning prose appreciation lessons.

Neither group gained on test two, Reader Participation. The test asks the reader to read a selection and then indicate the word from a list of words, such as: amusement, delight, indifference, terror, etc., which best tells how the selection made him feel. The students resented checking "how they felt." In presenting literature to children, the students are instructed to avoid all such questions as: How does the poem make you feel? Therefore, the experimental group had been trained away from the thing desired in the test.

On test three, Reaction to Sensory Images, the experimental group made practically no gain. There was nothing in the method used which would stress this feature of the test.

On test four, Comparisons, both groups lost. Again there was but little mention of comparisons as being "true, far-fetched or mixed" in the method of instruction.

On test five, Trite and Fresh Expressions, both groups gained; the experimental group gained .77 and the control group .70. The method in the experimental group included considerable practice in determining fresh expressions; also, in the composition classes, or control group, students were encouraged to use the exact word, the vivid word, etc., and to avoid trite expressions.

On test six, Rhythm, the experimental group made its greatest gain, which was undoubtedly due to the practice of reading poems aloud and thereby being made conscious of the rhythm.

ANALYSIS OF TEST RESULTS

Abbott and Trabue, Exercises in Judging Poetry

There are thirteen exercises in each series X and Y of the Abbott and Trabue test. In each exercise there is a poem or a stanza of a poem which is recognized by critics to be good poetry, and with it "a set of variants in which the original poem was deliberately made worse by diminishing or completely annulling one or another of its characteristic merits. In lowering the poetic quality, then, of each poem the attempt has been, in one version (called hereafter "sentimental") to falsify the emotion by introducing silly, gushy, affected or otherwise insincere feelings; in another version (the "prosaic") to reduce the poet's imagery to a more pedestrian and commonplace level; in a third (the "metrical") to render the movement either entirely awkward or less fine and subtle than the original."⁵ These four versions—the original, the sentimental, the prosaic and the metrical—are presented on one page, forming one of the exercises. The student is to read the poems and decide which seems to him to be the best poetry and to mark that one best.

It was interesting to note the versions considered "best" by the Normal School students in the experiment. If they did not select the original version as best, which of the versions (sentimental, prosaic or metrical) did they choose as best? On series X, 64 per cent selected the sentimental; 19 per cent the metrical; 17 per cent the prosaic. On series Y, 56 per cent selected the sentimental; 34 per cent the prosaic; 10 per cent the metrical. That the sentimental versions are selected more frequently than the others is in keeping with Abbott's findings. "The broad curve of sentiment reaches its peak in the high school years, but continues well into college."⁶

⁵ Abbott and Trabue: Teachers College Bulletin, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York City, p. 5.

⁶ Abbott, Allan, and Trabue, M. R. "Standards of Attainment." (see p. 12).

On the final test, fewer of the sentimental and metrical versions were selected; but there was an increase in the number of prosaic versions selected. The choices of individual students on the first and second series are given in Table VII for ten students taken at random from the experimental group as good examples of the entire group.

The poems in which the original was selected as "best" by very few students were:

Series X

Jenny Kissed Me—Hunt
In Praise of Pope—Dobson
Dirge (from Cymbeline)—Shakespeare

Series Y

The Bobolink (lines from the Biglow Papers)—Lowell
The White Owl—Tennyson
Skating at Nightfall (lines from The Prelude)
—Wordsworth
The Creation of Light (lines from Paradise Lost)—Milton
The poems in which the original was selected as "best" by many students were:

Series X

Milkman, Milkman—Mother Goose
Attack (from Marmion)—Scott
Bugle Song—Tennyson
The Highwayman (final stanza)—Noyes
Fairy Gold—Rose Fyleman

Series Y

As I Was Going—Mother Goose
Going to the Tournament—Thornburg
Sweet Peas (lines from "I stood tiptoe upon a little hill")
—Keats
Tea Time—Lucas.

TABLE VII
INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS' CHOICES ON SERIES X AND Y

Student	Version	Series X	Series Y
I.....	S M P	6 1 —	2 — 3
II.....	S M P	6 1 —	1 — 1
III.....	S M P	8 1 1	4 1 2
IV.....	S M P	4 3 2	1 1 3
V.....	S M P	7 2 2	6 1 1
VI.....	S M P	2 2 3	1 1 2
VII.....	S M P	5 — 1	1 — 1
VIII.....	S M P	4 2 2	2 — 1
IX.....	S M P	6 3 2	2 1 2
X.....	S M P	4 3 3	1 1 2

S—Sentimental. M—Metrical. P—Prosaic.

In Table VII, the choices on series X and Y of ten students from the experimental group are given. The table is to be read as follows:

Student number I on the X series selected six of the sentimental versions and one of the metrical versions as best. This student's score for the test was six, since she had seven wrong out of the thirteen. On the next series, or final test, she selected two of the sentimental versions and three of the prosaic versions as best. Her score on the final test was eight. During the twelve weeks something has happened which has caused her to care less for the sentimental versions and to select more of the true versions, but she has selected three prosaic versions on the final test and none on the first.

Student number II on series X selected six of the sentimental versions and one of the metrical as best. Her score on the test was six. On the final test, she selected one of the sentimental and one of the prosaic as best; her score was nine. Her final score seems to indicate that through contact with the best poetry for children she has developed a taste for true poetry.

Logassa-Wright. Tests for the Appreciation of Literature

The reliability of the whole test was $r = .58$. Of the individual tests, the first and sixth were most reliable having coefficients of correlation of .76 and .49. On these two tests the experimental group made its greatest residual gains. By comparison of medians on the initial and final tests, the group gained .97 on test one and 1.47 on test six. The control group made gains of $-.25$ on the test one and .37 on test six. Although the other tests were not very reliable, their coefficients being .33, .24, .31 and .095, they were of diagnostic value and the experimenter found them of value as interesting classroom exercises.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY

Briefly stated, the following conclusions summarize the more significant findings of this investigation:

1. Students' own literary appreciation, as measured by the Abbott-Trabue, Exercises in Judging Poetry, is increased by an intensive course in Children's Literature. Their scores increased from the High School Senior level to above the College Senior level.

2. General ability, knowledge of sentence structure and grammar, reading comprehension, and chronological age have little to do with students' appreciation of literature.

3. These data, and those of the supplementary study found in the appendix, seem to indicate that literary appreciation, or taste, is a matter of contact with literature, and can be developed by the reading and hearing of the best.

4. Many students of ages 16 to 19 prefer the "sentimental" poetry, which is probably natural since they are adolescents.

OTHER STUDIES SUGGESTED BY THE DATA

1. Compare the development of literary appreciation through a professionalized course in literature with the development of literary appreciation through a regular academic course in literature.

2. The effect of other methods of teaching Children's Literature upon the students' own appreciation.

3. A study of the relation of a teacher's appreciation to the development of her pupils' appreciation.

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II. METHOD

The experimenter sincerely believes that if children's tastes in literature are to be developed by their being in close touch with the best literature for children, then their teachers must know what is best and how to put the child in close touch with it. Therefore, the instructor's aim was to have her students become familiar with and enjoy the wealth of literature for children and know ways of giving this wealth to children.

The classes were carried on in a rather informal manner. During the first part of the term, the instructor read many poems and stories to the group, funny ones to laugh over and serious ones to think about, which were favorites with children and yet greatly enjoyed by adults. In reading, telling stories, introducing new books, and so on, the instructor attempted to use materials of interest to the group as well as to children and to carry on these activities as she would like them carried on with children.

The first two class periods were taken up with the tests.

The units of work as indicated in the outline were not necessarily presented in order; one group might be working on children's interests, another on poetry, and another on storytelling. Also number III in the outline, "Know ways of interesting children in the reading of good books, etc." was not considered a thing apart, but was an integral part of each selection read throughout the term.

To introduce the unit on Children's Interests the experimenter selected seven poems which ranked very high per grade for the first six grades according to the Huber study¹ and seven indicated in the same study to be choices of high school children or as ones rejected by children in the elementary school. The children's favorites selected were:

- Grade 1. { Baa Baa Black Sheep—Mother Goose
- “ ” { I Like Little Pussy—Taylor

¹ Hubner, Bruner, and Curry. *Children's Interests in Poetry*. Rand, McNally Co. 1927.

- Grade 2. The Little Elf-Man—Bangs
 “ 3. The Sugar Plum Tree—Field
 “ 4. Mr. Nobody—Unknown
 “ 5. Little Orphant Annie—Riley
 “ 6. The House with Nobody in It—Kilmer

Those rejected or adult were:

- Twink! Twink!—Seegmiller
 Curly Locks—Mother Goose
 How Sleep the Brave—Collins
 Little Boy Blue—Field
 Abou Ben Adhem—Hunt
 Answer to a Child's Question—Coleridge
 The Barefoot Boy—Whittier.

These poems were mimeographed and distributed to members of the class. They were asked to “Select one of these poems for each grade, one to six, which you think children of that age would enjoy.” The instructor was not concerned with the grade placement, but with the number of rejected or adult poems which the students selected for children. About one-third of the poems selected by the students were from the “rejected” list and had such comments as: Little Boy Blue—“because it's about a little boy,” The Barefoot Boy—“because I had it in the sixth grade.” This exercise revealed the need of study of scientific findings and reports of expert teachers on children's interests. The class pointed out what elements in the poems chosen by children had probably won the favor of the children. These findings were used as a check-up on all materials suggested for children.

Before introducing the unit, “Know and enjoy good books for children,” the experimenter desired to learn something of the taste of the group. She asked the students to give the following information:

1. Title of poem you enjoy very much
2. Title of book you enjoy very much
3. Title of play you enjoy very much
4. What books have you in your personal library?

The information on number 4 was most unreliable. Some students reported “none,” others “couldn't remember,” and

others gave incomplete lists. The students had seen very few plays (except given at the school or church) until they came to the Normal School and were encouraged to attend the theatres. They expressed a preference for musical comedies, "My Maryland" and "Rose Marie" being popular; and for movies, "Ben Hur" and "Sunny Side Up" being favorites. The response to number 1 was most interesting to the experimenter. Out of a list of some thirty different titles these ten had the greatest frequency:

The Raven—Poe
The Barefoot Boy—Whittier
If—Kipling
The First Snow Fall—Lowell
The Highwayman—Noyes
Somebody's Mother
The House by the Side of the Road—Foss
April Rain—Lovejoy
Opportunity—Sill
Evangeline—Longfellow.

This exercise was repeated at the close of the term and an account of it is given toward the end of this discussion.

Having some idea of the students' tastes, the instructor endeavored to stimulate interest in children's books of different types by: giving a setting for and telling a part of a romance cycle and giving sources for other cycles and legends for students' outside reading hours; exhibiting beautifully illustrated editions of myths and fairy stories, reading a few of the passages illustrated and giving bibliography for students' reading; having students read biographies selecting passages to read to group which they found particularly interesting. After the students' reading there was always a period of discussion of the best ways of presenting the materials to children; the chief guide in methods being the lessons observed in the demonstration schools. Expert teachers demonstrated ways of teaching certain types of lessons such as: storytelling, reading of poems, reading of prose selections, and handling of library periods. The gen-

eral principle was: Every selection, prose or poetry, suggests in and of itself the best means for its presentation.

In setting up standards for judging poetry, the instructor did not wish to use the spoiled-version technique since that was the one employed in the tests. Instead she placed on the board without the poets' names three poems: "Silver" by Walter de la Mare, "Sparkle Up, Little Tired Flower" by Hilda Conkling, and "Evening" by a student. The students were to comment on each one. The class discussion which followed was most interesting, especially when students who had liked "Evening" best, "because it gave such a soothing feeling," found the rhyme to be forced, trite expressions such as "the sun is sinking in the west," prosaic expressions such as "and you want to rest," etc.; and found new beauty in the fresh expressions, "moveless fish," "silver feathered sleep," in Walter de la Mare's poem and "rain of night" in Hilda Conkling's. The practice in evaluating poems came during the making of the cycles or units when each student selected her own poems. If a student were in doubt, she asked for the help of the group. Considerable time was spent in reading aloud "favorite" poems, learning lines or stanzas of these and compiling individual bibliographies. Some of the cycles were:

The Day

Morning—Sara Teasdale

Afternoon On a Hill—Edna St. Vincent Millay

Evening Waterfall—Carl Sandberg

Stars—Sara Teasdale

Spring Fever

I Meant To Do My Work Today—Richard Le Gallienne

The Book-Worm—Walter de la Mare

If I Had My Way—Mary Virginia Harris (age 9)

On the Sunny Side—James Whitcomb Riley

A Hot Weather Song—Don Marquis

Vacation Song—Katherine Lee Bates

Just for Fun

Topsy-Turvy World—William Brighty Rands
 Contrary Mary—Nancy Byrd Turner
 A Meddler—Michael Lewis
 Nonsense Rhymes—Gelett Burgess
 Three Famous Limericks—Cosmo Monkhouse
 Four Tricky Limericks—Carolyn Wells

The Moon

The Crescent Moon—Amy Lowell
 Moon Song—Hilda Conkling
 Moon Thought—Hilda Conkling
 Silver—Walter de la Mare
 Full Moon—Sara Teasdale
 Night Goes Rushing By—Hilda Conkling

Trees

Loveliest of Trees—Housman
 Locust Tree in Bloom—Conkling
 Trees—Walter de la Mare
 Salute to the Trees—Van Dyke
 Trees—Kilmer

Houses

The House With Nobody In It—Joyce Kilmer
 The House on the Hill—Edwin A. Robinson
 Roofs—Joyce Kilmer
 Song for a Little House—Christopher Morley.

Toward the end of the term the students were again asked to write titles of poems enjoyed very much. These ten stood highest:

Afternoon on a Hill—Millay
 The House With Nobody In It—Kilmer
 The Highwayman—Noyes
 Sea Shell—Amy Lowell
 Stars—Teasdale
 If—Kipling
 The Runaway Colt—Frost
 Lines and Squares—Milne

There Are Fairies at the Bottom of Our Garden—Fyleman
Someone—Walter de la Mare.

This selection indicates a sincere enjoyment of poetry for children by many of the students after they had had an opportunity to become acquainted with it. Although they had little money for the purchasing of books, about forty-six students purchased *Silver Pennies*, Thompson, and fifteen bought *This Singing World*, Untermeyer.

In order to illustrate how unit number four, "See possibilities of enriching other subjects with appropriate literature," was developed, the writer will review the handling of one topic. The history course of study for the sixth grade gives this topic: "Life in the Middle Ages." The students in children's literature classes were to select literature which would enrich the study of this period in history. The literature chosen was:

WARREN: King Arthur and his Knights.
MAITLAND: Heroes of Chivalry.
MALORY: King Arthur Stories.
TAPPAN: When Knights Were Bold.
ALDRICH: Friar Jerome's Beautiful Book.
LAMPREY: In the Days of the Guild;
Masters of the Guild.
BALDWIN: Story of Roland.
TENNYSON: Idylls of the King;
Lady of Shalott.
SCOTT: Ivanhoe.
LOWELL: Vision of Sir Launfal.
SCOTT: The Knight's Toast.
IRVING: The Alhambra.
PYLE: Robin Hood.
KELMAN: Stories from Chaucer.
DARTON: The Story of the Canterbury Pilgrim.
BROOKS: Story of Marco Polo.

Some of the selections were to be told and some read to the children by the teacher. Warren: "King Arthur and his Knights" and Maitland: "Heroes of Chivalry" the pupils were to read for themselves from their own books. Other references were to be read and reported upon by individual pupils. The teacher selected passages from Tennyson: "Idylls of the King" and "Lady of Shalott" to be read to the children.

As a result of this unit, when it was given to children, the children *lived* for a time in the Middle Ages. They dramatized stories, drew pictures to illustrate stories and parts of stories and memorized lines of poetry. They even organized guilds—the weaver, leather, metal guilds, etc. They made up songs—words and music—which they sang as they worked in their guilds. The instructor in music was called in to criticize their songs and the instructor in industrial arts was called in to guide their activities in art.

Unit five, “Experiencing the creating of something in prose or verse and thereby see more vividly the ways of providing opportunities for children’s free expression,” was carried out in this manner. After hearing many poems on the sea—love of the sea, fear of the sea, and adventure on the sea—the students were encouraged to express their own ideas of the sea in verse or prose form. When given a choice, many tried to write poems who would have strenuously objected if they had been asked to do so. They read what they had written to the group and the group made suggestions for improvement. The students liked this activity and have been most successful in its use with children.

III. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR STUDENTS

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THE CREATIVE

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(In addition to these suggested books the students had access to a well selected library covering the best of juvenile standard literature.)

SUPPLEMENTARY STUDY

The instructor had two groups of seniors (second year students) come to her recently to take the course in Children's Literature. Both groups have completed all of their English work except Children's Literature; both groups are preparing to teach in the intermediate grades next fall. They are different in that one group was trained in the city schools of Baltimore where there is easy access to good libraries; the other group was trained in smaller schools in surrounding counties where there were well equipped libraries, poorly equipped libraries, and no libraries. The city group has been in school fourteen years and the county group, thirteen years.

Upon meeting the groups the instructor gave them the Series X of the Abbott-Trabue test just as she had done during her experiment the year preceding.

The groups are small, and no attempt was made to equate them. The results are, therefore, interesting merely as pictures of real classroom situations.

The results are given in Table VIII.

TABLE VIII
COMPARISON OF GROUPS IN SUPPLEMENTARY STUDY

		Access to libraries difficult	Access to libraries easy
General Ability.....	Median	118.0	165
Reading Comprehension...	"	10.16	11.33
Sentence Structure.....	"	48.13	51.40
Chronological Age.....	"	19.07	18.88
Abbott Scores.....	"	6.75	8.75
Number of Students.....	"	17	21

The most obvious difference between these two groups is that of access to libraries. The students who have come from the schools of Baltimore have had easy access to libraries. There is a large, well-equipped central building, with branches in every part of the city; also, the grade schools and the high schools have libraries of their own. The students who have come from the high schools of the

counties have had, for the most part, little opportunity to use libraries.

There are other differences, as shown in Table VIII. The group which has had "easy access to libraries" has the advantage in general ability, in reading comprehension and in sentence structure. It was found, however, in the previous study that these factors have but little influence upon the appreciation of literature; the greatest influence in developing taste or appreciation comes through the contact one makes with the best of that art. This is demonstrated by the comparison of scores on the appreciation test of these two groups. The group called "access to libraries difficult" made a median score of 6.75 on the Abbott-Trabue test—about equivalent to the score for College Freshmen, which is 6.80. The group called "access to libraries easy" made a median score of 8.75 on the Abbott-Trabue test, which is considerably above the College Senior level of 7.96, and a little lower than the level for graduate students in English, which is 9.47.

These findings seem to warrant the further investigation of the effect of environment upon appreciation.

VITA

Eunice Katherine Crabtree was born in Lincoln, Nebraska, January 5, 1901. She received her elementary education in the Model School of the State Normal School, Peru, Nebraska, and public schools of Lincoln, Nebraska. She completed her high school course in the High School Department of the State Normal School, River Falls, Wisconsin, in 1918. She received the degree of B. A. at the George Washington University in 1922 and of M. A. at the same institution in 1923. The title of the Master's essay was *Milton's Ideals of Freedom*. She was a full-time student at The Johns Hopkins University during the years 1926 to 1928. Her studies continued at The Johns Hopkins University during the years 1928-29 and 1929-30, the first year as a holder of a University Scholarship.

She was a teacher of the first grade at Friends School, Washington, D. C., 1922-23; instructor in English at the State Teachers College, Mankato, Minnesota, 1923-24; instructor in English at the Indiana State Teachers College, Terre Haute, Indiana, 1924-25; instructor in English at the State Normal School at Towson, Maryland, 1925-26 and since 1928.

